



ASPIRA



AN INVESTMENT
IN LATINO
YOUTH

About ASPIRA

The ASPIRA Association, Inc. is the only national nonprofit organization devoted solely to serving Puerto Rican and other Latino youth through leadership development and education. ASPIRA takes its name from the Spanish verb *aspirar*, "to aspire."

Since 1961, ASPIRA has pursued its mission of empowering the Latino community through the development of its youth. All of ASPIRA's goals and activities spring from one basic belief: Puerto Ricans and Latinos have the collective potential to move their community forward.

ASPIRA looks at Latino youth and sees the potential there; leaders waiting to emerge. With statewide offices in six states and Puerto Rico and an overall budget of over \$16 million per year, ASPIRA's 350 full-time staff members and over 1,000 volunteers serve 25,000 youth and their families each year to develop that potential. These are our *Aspirantes*—those youth who will become educated, committed leaders for the community's future benefit. Since its founding, ASPIRA has provided over 250,000 youth with the educational enrichment, guidance, motivation and leadership skills they need to remain in school, go on to college and contribute to their community. Over 90% of our *Aspirantes* go on to higher education. Moreover, most mainland Puerto Rican leaders today—in business, education, government and other professions—are a product of the encouragement ASPIRA offered during their adolescence.



ASPIRA

*AN INVESTMENT
IN LATINO
YOUTH*

Dear Friend,

Over the past 36 years, ASPIRA has helped over 250,000 Puerto Rican and Latino youth and their families to become leaders in their community. We would like to share with you excerpts from a letter from one of our Aspirantes. Cynthia came to ASPIRA from an inner city neighborhood known for having the lowest reading scores in the nation. She was a Puerto Rican student whose parents had completed the eighth grade and had received high school equivalency diplomas.

Here is what she had to say about being an Aspirante: "I joined ASPIRA during high school because it was the only ticket out. My childhood dream was to become a doctor and through ASPIRA I would find the only people who believed this was possible."

Cynthia realized her dream, but almost 10 years after we received that letter, there is still a problem in Cynthia's neighborhood—and in other inner city neighborhoods nationwide, with respect to educational achievement of Latino youth. At ASPIRA, we know there is still a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done to prepare these youth for the challenges they face at home, at school and in their careers.

When we receive letters like this one, we are reassured that ASPIRA's positive approach is the key to the future for many Latino youth. We believe in the youth we serve, and we help them to believe in themselves and their communities. The *ASPIRA Process* of leadership development teaches students to expect more and get more out of themselves and others.

This brochure illustrates how ASPIRA helps Puerto Rican and Latino youth and their families through the wide variety of programs we conduct in six states and Puerto Rico. We can not advance our mission of empowering these youth without the support of the many friends who have inspired us, kept us strong, and guided our efforts. As you read the ASPIRA Brochure, keep in mind the commitment of ASPIRA's thousands of friends. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
National Executive Director



Raquel Ortiz
Chair,
National Board
of Directors

The "ASPIRA Process"

ASPIRA has developed a unique and highly successful intervention model. The ASPIRA Process consciously accentuates the positive, placing emphasis on developing the potential of Aspirants rather than on trying to overcome their perceived weaknesses. The ASPIRA Process of leadership development is grounded in decades of research about youth. It reaches youth to become aware of their current situations, then environment and then community, to analyze its causes and consequences, and to take action for change in their personal lives and in their community. It builds pride in our Latino cultural background as a stimulus for self-assessment and motivation to succeed. ASPIRA brings together students, parents, schools and community members to promote educational success, youth leadership, and as a means of developing our communities. ASPIRA also works with foundations, corporations, and the government to expand educational opportunities for young Latinos.

The ASPIRA Association

The ASPIRA Association is a confederation of independent, nationwide ASPIRA community-based organizations that currently have offices in the Latino communities in Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Puerto Rico. Each Associate operates a variety of programs that grow out of the specific conditions and needs of their own communities. However, they share a common mission: Promoting the development of the Puerto Rican and Latino community through the education and leadership development of its youth. The **ASPIRA Process** is at the center of all ASPIRA activities. The ASPIRA Clubs, organized in over 500 schools and forming ASPIRA Club Federations in major cities, are the core of ASPIRA's organization. ASPIRA Associates, along with ASPIRA's broader network of 5,000 community-based organizations, school districts, local and national policy-makers, and corporate representatives, serve information and assistance from the ASPIRA Association National Office in Washington, D.C., which operates national model programs and serves as the national voice for the Association.

ASPIRA Initiatives

Youth Leadership and Community Service

The ASPIRA Clubs Federation is a national network of



The **ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program** provides 90 high school students with the opportunity to study public policy and work with local leaders in community service internships for a full year. Selected students participate in a National Fellowship Program, spending the summer in Washington, D.C. as National Fellows. They work with national policy makers in Congress, federal agencies and national organizations. ASPIRA's Youth Leadership and Public Policy Institutes and programs in Cincinnati, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, reach hundreds more students locally each year.

The **ASPIRA Corps**, ASPIRA's AmeriCorps Community Service Program, supports 130 full-time volunteers in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Newark, New Jersey, New York City, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who spend a year tutoring and mentoring middle and high school students, and working to bring families together in after-school activities. In New York, 75 ASPIRA Corps members collaborate on AmeriCorpsProject Safe and Sound to create a violence-free environment in the South Bronx. ASPIRA Corps members receive a stipend and funds for college after their service.

The **ASPIRA Alumni Association** is creating an active network of over 210,000 ASPIRA alumni to expand and enrich community-based, self-help activities, promote mentoring programs and volunteering and to support ASPIRA.

Educational Access and Careers

The **Talent Search Program**, a core ASPIRA program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, targets first-generation college-bound students who demonstrate a potential to succeed. Talent Search counselors provide information to these talented students on opportunities in higher education, assist with applications for admissions and financial aid, as well as assist with ACT and SAT preparation.

The **ASPIRA National Health Careers Program** has for 25 years provided over 1,000 high school and college students each year with the counseling, motivation, and academic support to stimulate them to become health professionals.

The ASPIRA Process is fully realized in the **ASPIRA schools**. The Antonio Pantaleo Alternative High School in Chicago, ASPIRA

"I'm a very big supporter of ASPIRA. It's great for young people to get a sense of positive identity. Just the name alone, ASPIRA, means to aspire. I think that's an inspiration."

Adri Alvarado,
Administrator, U.S. Small Business
Administration

Lighthouse and its **Market Research Lab** programs are a good example of these initiatives.

In Puerto Rico, ASPIRA's **Upward Bound Program** aids participants to complete secondary education and to undertake and complete post-secondary education programs. Its **Head Start** program is one of the largest national direct Head Start programs in the country, providing a variety of education and enrichment programs for children and parents.

Community Mobilization for Educational Excellence

The **ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence (APEX)** program trains parents to become informed advocates who work together to improve education in their communities. Trained parents then mobilize and train other parents to join their efforts, spreading the program's impact to approximately 900 parent-new four years. APEX graduates in Chicago have formed the ASPIRA Parents Federation to promote education reform and parent advocacy. Close to 100 APEX graduates have been elected to local school councils and other school bodies in Chicago.

The **Teachers, Organizations, and Parents for Students (TOPS) Partnership Project** brings together teachers, corporate volunteers and parents as a team to help individual students achieve their personal and academic goals. Teams integrate parent involvement activities with child-centered counseling and mentoring.

By targeting youth at risk of dropping out of traditional education, ASPIRA has designed a variety of **Intervention programs**, including tutoring and mentoring programs designed to work with families to keep children in school and to increase their achievement. In addition, ASPIRA administers programs which work with high school drop-outs, using a culturally-sensitive approach to learning in all curriculum areas to receive Graduate Equivalency Degrees in Chicago, the school, community and local school councils have collaborated at the **Roberto Clemente Community Academy** to boost attendance rates and increase the number of seniors applying

to college. As a result of these efforts, The **Getting Ahead The Education Way (GATEWAY)** program is working with 100 schools across the state to help students make the transition from middle school to high school.

ASPIRA Research and Advocacy

ASPIRA has been at the forefront of the effort to focus attention on the often dismal educational conditions and exceedingly high dropout rates of Latino students and to offer positive solutions. The **Mobilization for Equity** provides information to community members around the country on public policy issues related to the equity of educational services and education reform. It helps the Latino community understand students' rights and promotes effective advocacy strategies for change. ASPIRA is recognized as a major force in Latino youth advocacy on local and national levels. ASPIRA is also recognized for its collaborative work with other national organizations such as the **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda**, the organization that brings together the 10 major national Latino organizations in the country. The ASPIRA Associates advocate both in major cities and state-wide, before local school boards, councils and city assemblies, and before state legislatures, to inform policy-makers of the issues that affect the education of Latino youth. The National Office is a visible advocate at the national level, informing Congress and federal agencies.



Antonio Pantaleo, founder of ASPIRA and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom

ASPIRA TIMELINE

1961

ASPIRA is established by the Puerto Rican Hispanic Leadership Forum as a nonprofit, bilingual counseling agency to assist Puerto Rican youth through career counseling.

1965

ASPIRA becomes incorporated, is declared tax exempt, and establishes its own board of directors.

1968

Bilingual Education Act becomes law. ASPIRA of America is founded with a \$750,000 grant from the Ford Foundation.

1969

Affiliate offices are established in Newark, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Juan.

1970

Health Careers Program launched by ASPIRA of New York.

1972

Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund files a class action suit against the Board of Education of New York City on behalf of 15 school children, ASPIRA, and other organizations.

1974

The Board of Education of NYC signs the **ASPIRA Consent Decree**, agreeing to provide bilingual education for all limited English proficient students in city schools.

1976

ASPIRA of America study, *Social Policies in Educational Attainment*, identifies achievement gaps among Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Metropolitan Areas. 1970.

1980

ASPIRA of America creates the Center for Educational Equity in Washington, D.C. as its division for research and advocacy.

1981

ASPIRA of Florida joins ASPIRA. ASPIRA of Pennsylvania begins three-year study on dropout and delinquency rates among Puerto Rican youth.

1983

ASPIRA of New York study, *Recall and Recall High School Dropout Rates in New York City*.

1984

ASPIRA of Illinois Chicago Dropout Study released and ASPIRA Coca-Cola Support Services Project (Project A.C.E.S.S.) initiated. ASPIRA of Puerto Rico examines the dropout rate in a report entitled *El porcentaje efectivo para el mejoramiento del desempeño escolar: programación y proyección*.

1985

ASPIRA of Alaska changes its name to the ASPIRA Association, establishes a National Office and the Institute for Policy Research in Washington, D.C. and begins research for the *Alaska High School Dropout Study*.

1986

The first group of Aspirants come to Washington as National Fellows in the ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program Summer Internship.

1988

The Hispanic Community Mobilization for Dropout Prevention begins a national parent-advocacy program.

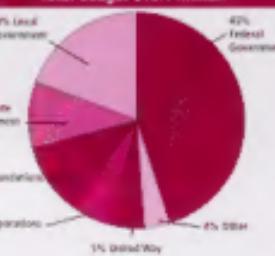
1991

ASPIRA of Connecticut is officially recognized as an ASPIRA affiliate.

1996

ASPIRA holds its first National Conference Latino as a Critical Issue: Preparing Tomorrow's leaders in Washington, D.C. Antonio Pantaleo, founder of ASPIRA, is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

1996 BUDGET Total Budget \$16.1 Million



The ASPIRA Institute for Policy Research conducts nationally recognized educational research and policy research as well as analysis on issues affecting the Puerto Rican and greater Latino community. ASPIRA disseminates the results to the community through widely-distributed reports, pilot projects, electronic networks, and collaborations with other organizations.

The ASPIRA Association collaborates with over 200 national and local community and professional organizations across the country. One of our main collaborations is with

Educational Testing Service, a broad based 10 year partnership through which ASPIRA and ETS share a host of educational resources and expertise.

Legislative advocacy is carried out according to regulations governing 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organizations and is always nonpartisan.

ASPIRA Communications

ASPIRA's quarterly national newsletter, **ASPIRA News**, provides local and national leaders with information on ASPIRA's programs, education issues, research, policy, and commentary on current issues. ASPIRA's opinions are widely reported in major newspapers and staff are frequently invited to speak at national conferences, meetings, and on radio and television programs. ASPIRA's training manuals, booklets, reports, and fact sheets receive extensive coverage and are distributed throughout the country. Further information on ASPIRA's publications can be found in the brochure, *What's Available from ASPIRA*.

ASPIRA Looks to the Future

As we rapidly approach the 21st century, the education issues that ASPIRA has effectively dealt with for so long are becoming ever more critical. ASPIRA's growth has been impressive since its beginning as a parent-initiated community organization in 1961, but there is always more to do. The next several years will see ASPIRA enhancing and extending its program assistance to better serve the rapidly-growing Latino community.

ASPIRA List of Funders

Allied Signal	Con Edison	Hispanic Housing	Miller Brewing Company	Sony Electronics
The Allstate Foundation	Max & Dora Cooper Family Foundation	The Hitachi Foundation	Jay R. Monroe Memorial Foundation	Sony USA Foundation, Inc.
American Express	Coors Brewing Company	Hoffman LaRoche	Nabisco	St. Paul Federal Bank
The Amoco Foundation	Corestate Bank	The Houston Endowment	National Education Association	Summa Bank
Anheuser Busch Companies	The Corporation for National Service	Howmedica	National Science Foundation	Sun-Sentinel
AT & T	County of Mercer, Department of Human Services	Hyde and Watson Foundation	Neediest Kids Fund	Supermarkets General Corporation
AT & T of Puerto Rico	CPC International Inc.	IBI International Foundation	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development	Texaco, Inc.
Bally Park Place Casino	Dade County Public Schools	Illinois Arts Council	New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services, Title XX Block Grant	The Travelers Foundation
J Balsera Bus Company	Dean Witter	Illinois Department of Education	Northern Trust Bank	Time Warner
Bank of America	Deutsche Corporation Foundation	Illinois Department of Human Services	Novartis Pharmaceuticals Co.	Toyota Motor Sales USA
Broward County School Board	DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund	Illinois Department of Public Aid	NYNEX	Triton College
Bell Atlantic	R. Eaton	Illinois Department of Public Health	George Ohl Trust	The Turrell Fund
BellSouth	Educational Testing Service	LC. Penney Company Fund	Oxford Health Plan	United Parcel Service
Bristol-Myers Squibb	Exxon Corporation	Jersey Central Power & Light	Pacificare	United Way of Dade County
Broward Children's Services Administration	The Everett Foundation	Johnson & Johnson	Palm Beach Children's Services Council	United Way Crusade of Mercy
Burnby Company, Inc.	Fairfield Bank	Keystone Mercy	Pathmark Stores, Inc.	United Way of Camden
Sam & Louise Campe Foundation	Florida Department of Children and Families	Kraft Foods, Inc.	The William Penn Foundation	United Way of Essex and West Hudson
Carnegie Corporation of New York	Florida Department of Community Affairs	MacArthur Foundation	PepsiCo	The UPS Foundation
CHASE Bank	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice	Matsushita Electric Corporation	Pepsi-Cola Company	The U.S. Department of Education
Chase Manhattan Foundation	Florida Department of Education	MCi	Pfizer Inc.	The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Chesbrough-Ponds	Florida Governor's Office of Drug Free Schools	McMaster Carr Supply Company	The Philadelphia Foundation	The U.S. Department of Justice
Chicago Board of Education	The Ford Foundation	Merck	Philadelphia Fund	US Sprint
Chicago Community Trust	Ford Motor Company	Merck Family Foundation	Pillsbury-Rudy Division	The Edward W. and Stella C. Van Houten Memorial Fund, First Union Bank Trustee
Chrysler Corporation	Foundation Collaborative	Merck, Sharp, Dohme	Pioneer Bank	Victoria Foundation
City National Bank of New Jersey	Garnett	Mercy Health Plan of New Jersey	Pitney Bowes	The Women-Lambert Foundation
City of Jersey City, Community Development Block Grant	General Electric Corporation	Metro-Dade Human Resources Support	PNC Bank	WCBS-TV
City of Miami CDBG	Greater Philadelphia Trust	Metro-Dade Justice System	Polk Brothers Foundation	WGN Radio 720
City of Miami Beach CDBG	Harper-Collins Publishers	Support	Prudential Foundation	W.P. & H.B. White Foundation
City of Newark, Community Development Block Grant	Charles Hayden Foundation	Metro-Dade Parks and Recreation	Public Service Energy & Gas Quaker Oats Foundation	Xerox Foundation
City of Paterson, Department of Human Services	Health Partners	Mt. Charles E. Merrill, Jr.	Roxitoxic Foundation	
City of Philadelphia	The Coca-Cola Company	Merrill Lynch	Sara Lee Foundation	
City of West Palm Beach		HIP Health Plan of Florida		
Civic Committee of Chicago		The Miami Herald		

"Our youth are our future, and ASPIRA has continually supported young people, year after year, and encouraged them to continue. It's a wonderful organization. Especially now... when young people give up on college because it costs too much, we really need organizations like this and we need to support them."

Jimmy Smits
Aspirante
Emmy Award-winning Actor

ASPIRA Association

National Office
1441 1 Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202-835-3600
fax 202-835-3613
aspira@asao.com
<http://www.inacorp.com/aspira>

ASPIRA of Connecticut, Inc.
1600 State Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605
203-336-5762
fax 203-365-5803

ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.
3650 N. Miami Avenue
Miami, FL 33137
305-578-1512
fax 305-576-0810

ASPIRA, Inc., of Illinois
2425 W. Western Avenue
Chicago, IL 60647
773-252-0970
fax 773-252-0994

ASPIRA, Inc., of New Jersey
300 Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Newark, NJ 07104
201-484-7554
fax 201-484-0184

ASPIRA of New York, Inc.
470 Seventh Avenue
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10018
212-564-6880
fax 212-564-7152

ASPIRA, Inc., of Pennsylvania
2725 North Sixth Street
Philadelphia, PA 19133
215-229-1226
fax 215-229-0966

ASPIRA, Inc., de Puerto Rico
Apartado 29132
Estación 65 de Infantería
Río Piedras, PR 00929
787-758-1985
fax 787-257-2725

NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Ms. Raquel Ortiz
Chair of the Board
Ortiz Simon Productions, Inc.-Partner
Video Publishing Group, Inc. Senior Producer

*Ms. Helia M. Alfaro Bou
Chairperson, ASPIRA, Inc. of Puerto Rico
Professor Emeritus, University of Puerto Rico

*Ms. Hedy Peña
Chairperson, ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.
International Public Affairs
AT&T

*Ms. Sonia Sánchez
Chairperson, ASPIRA, Inc. of Illinois
Asst. Sergeant at Arms
Chicago City Council

*Mr. Daniel Agosto
Chairperson, ASPIRA of New York, Inc.
Assistant Deputy Comptroller
NYS Office of State Comptroller

*Willfredo Matos
Chairperson, ASPIRA of Connecticut
Retired Community Activist

*Mr. Oscar Cardona
Chairperson, ASPIRA Pennsylvania
Cigna

*Ms. Noemí Velázquez
Chairperson, ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey
Jersey City Public Schools

Mr. Hector C. Carreño
At-Large Member
Carreño Miranda, Inc.

Ms. Myrna Rivera, S.I.M.C.
At-Large Member
Senior Vice President
Smith Barney, Inc.

Mr. Francisco Taverna
Student Representative
ASPIRA of Florida, Inc.

Mr. Orlando F. Rendón, Jr.
Student Representative
ASPIRA, Inc. of Pennsylvania

Mr. Aníbal Ramos
Student Representative
ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey

Mr. Rubén Feliciano
Student Representative
ASPIRA, Inc. of Illinois

Heriberto Oquendo
Student Representative
ASPIRA of New York, Inc.

María Román
Student Representative
ASPIRA of Connecticut, Inc.

* Members of the National Executive Committee